

VI. Public Perceptions and Attitudes*

13

Chapter Summary

We have sought to operate on the principle that a better informed public is essential to the restoration of public confidence in the intelligence enterprise. The CIA Public Affairs Office was strengthened, an Outreach Program was devised, and increased contact with the public has resulted. We have made more unclassified studies and compilations available to the public. This new policy of openness is being undertaken with due regard for certain dangers, particularly in the area of protecting the quality of analysis and analysts themselves from the obvious pressures that increased openness could bring. (U)

Our dialogue with specialists in the academic world and private research concerns has broadened and intensified during the year to include conduct of special programs for civilian academicians and coordination of the expanding efforts of NFAC officers to improve their ties in academia. Formal, paid consultations are increasing and a new program of dinner symposia brings intelligence officers together with academic experts. There is also growing participation of intelligence specialists in academic and professional conferences. (U)

The Outreach Program

Since becoming Director of Central Intelligence, I have sought to institute what in effect constitutes a new model of American intelligence. This new model is largely based on my conviction that a better informed American public is essential to restoring confidence in this country's intelligence services. The Outreach

Program is designed to support this new concept of openness by bringing about greater public understanding of the intelligence process and the vital role of intelligence in support of the policymaker, by disseminating as much unclassified analysis as possible to provide greater public awareness and understanding of world issues, and to enhance our ability to protect and respect that information which must still be kept secret. (U)

My own activities have been designed to be compatible with these objectives, and I have been as candid as possible with the public during such occasions as five network television interviews, a dozen or more speeches to audiences as varied as university student bodies, Congressional interns, the Council on Foreign Relations, and St. John's Church on Lafayette Square in Washington. I have also had interviews with reporters from many different publications, including large daily newspapers, the leading weekly news magazines, the wire services and syndicated columnists, and I have encouraged other senior CIA officials to make themselves available to speak to such groups as the Brookings Institution and Sigma Delta Chi, the society of professional journalists. The CIA's senior briefer will have appeared before more than 180 outside groups by the end of this month, and other CIA employees will have spoken to approximately 80 such groups. (U)

We have strengthened our Public Affairs Office, which has supplied some 75 different unclassified studies to outside people and presented more than 100 unclassified briefings to newsmen. The queries which this office

receives from the media and responds to average about 80 per week. (U)

A tour program planned for the CIA Headquarters Building was tested through a series of trial tours for families of Agency employees and a group of Navy wives. While the response was generally favorable, the experiment also confirmed that a wide variety of logistics problems would make it impossible to conduct tours for the general public. (U)

Provision of Unclassified Intelligence to the Public

The Central Intelligence Agency has, over the past year and at my direction, adopted a new policy of openness which has included emphasis on making unclassified studies and compilations available to the public and looking at its classified studies with a view to issuing them in an unclassified form, if that is possible. (U)

CIA has, of course, been making some of its production available to the public for many years. Most of these publications dealt with the closed societies—the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and the Peoples Republic of China—where information access by Western scholars and the media is severely constrained. The objective throughout was to share with the academic community and other interested persons unclassified information and research results that had been developed by the Government at considerable expense and that would otherwise be unavailable to the public. (U)

*This unclassified Chapter on Public Perceptions and Attitudes is excerpted from the DCI's Annual Report for 1977.

These publications are highly valued by researchers, the press and other specialists. (U)

A substantial number of CIA special studies have also been published regularly at the request, and under the auspices, of the Joint Economic Committee (JEC) of the U.S. Congress, through its major periodic reports and compendia on the Soviet, East European, and Chinese economies. The most recent paper in this series is a study by the Office of Economic Research of the National Foreign Assessment Center on "Soviet Economic Problems and Prospects," published by the JEC in August 1977. I also brief the JEC in executive session every year on "The Allocation of Resources in the Soviet Union and China," and an unclassified version of that briefing is subsequently published by the Committee. (U)

CIA also published a number of research aids and statistical compilations under its own label. Examples include: the *Handbook of Economic Statistics, 1976*; *Peoples Republic of China: Timber Production and End Use*; *Peoples Republic of China: Handbook of Economic Indicators*; *Peoples Republic of China: International Trade Handbook*; *China: The Coal Industry*; *The Cuban Economy*; *A Statistical Review*; *Reconciliation of Soviet and Western Foreign Trade Statistics*; *Communist Aid to Less Developed Countries of the Free World*; and *China: Real Trends in Trade with Non-Communist Countries Since 1970*. These reports are favorably regarded by the academic and international business communities and by the media. They have earned a reputation for careful, scholarly analysis. (U)

The new thrust toward openness has resulted in the public release of a much larger number and range of intelligence studies, mostly on NFAC's initiative. Recent examples are: *The International Energy Situation: Outlook to 1985*; *Prospects for Soviet Oil Production*; *China: Oil Production Prospects*; *Soviet Economic Problems and Prospects*; and *China: 1977 Mid-Year Grain Outlook*. (U)

The new policy of openness as it applies to intelligence publications obviously contains potential pitfalls, in that it places the Intelligence Community in the public arena as a participant, however limited, in public debate. If the Intelligence Community is to continue to provide objective analysis of the highest quality, its analysis and analysts must be protected from the obvious political pressures that increased participation in the public arena bring. (U)

The two key issues here are those of protecting the *quality* of analysis and the *freedom* to conduct objective analysis and reporting—essential ingredients to maintaining credibility in the eyes of the public and the press. The public will mistrust CIA and Community-wide analyses if they are perceived as methods for influencing partisan debates in support of or against certain positions or for serving certain political interests. (U)

An important consideration of credibility, we think, is the context in which intelligence is released. One proper context is when the subject matter and methods deal with substantive issues which are of continuing broad interest and are under the regular scholarly scrutiny of specialists both in and out of Government. The general status of the Soviet economy is an example. In such cases, a policy of making available on a regular basis the methods and results of intelligence analysis—

within reasonable constraints of security—will contribute to a better informed public understanding and will foster a healthy intellectual interchange among Government and non-Government researchers. (U)

The other appropriate, but far more troublesome, context concerns issues of the moment: issues that because of immediate and pressing policy considerations require special intelligence assessments that are highly focused on specific policy-related issues. The CIA energy paper is an example. In such cases the credibility of the intelligence analysis will be best served if the release can be handled in such a way it is not seen as a unilateral Intelligence Community or CIA intervention, or at the initiative of one of the advocates on the issue, but at the request of most participants in the policy process for an independent, impartial assessment. (U)

There are many additional considerations concerning the forms and limitations of open use of intelligence to which we are giving continuing thoughtful attention. The basic question is one of determining the forms and limitations of exposure and of building the understanding and skills needed for dealing with the intricacies of public debate while carefully guarding our professional competence and objectivity. We recognize that this will require a strong commitment to be forthright when intelligence does not fully support a favored policy of a major policymaker. (U)

Relations with the Academic Community

The Central Intelligence Agency's dialogue with specialists in academia and private research has broadened and intensified during the last year or so. Even at Harvard, where

restrictive guidelines governing relationships between faculty and staff and the Intelligence Community have been promulgated, and at other campuses long unfriendly to the Agency, there seems to be a greater willingness by faculty and students to distinguish between concern over past CIA abuses and the current realities of our work. Improvements have resulted from changing attitudes on campus, a constricted job market for scholars, and other external factors, as well as from the expansion and enhancement of our academic relations program. (U)

In December 1976 the position of the Academic Coordinator, which during the preceding ten years had been the part-time responsibility of one officer, was broadened and upgraded. Two full-time officers were assigned the portfolio, which was augmented to include coordination of relationships with private research centers. Later, with the formulation of the National Foreign Assessment Center, the program was additionally upgraded. Two full-time, middle management officers formed the core of the new Academic Relations Staff. They conduct independent programs, coordinate the expanding efforts of NFAC officers to improve their ties in academia, and are initiating new programs. In addition, the staff will act as the secretariat for the NFAC Senior Review Panel, the scholar-in-residence program, and other such activities. (U)

The Academic Relations Staff maintains regular contact with about 200 leading scholars at universities around the country. During the first ten months of 1977, 32 unclassified Agency publications on Soviet, Chinese, and Latin American subjects were mailed to a total of over a hundred experts in those fields. Approximately 40 other scholars, most of whom

are directors of university international studies programs or private research centers, receive copies of other Agency publications. The requests of approximately 70 more scholars for copies of Agency publications or information also were filled by the Academic Relations Staff between January and October 1977. (U)

In addition, some NFAC offices maintain their own mailing lists of scholars working in particular disciplines. The Office of Economic Research, for example, sends copies of many of its unclassified publications to over 300 economists in the private sector, two-thirds of whom are academicians. All of these efforts help to keep prestigious scholars apprised of some of the Agency's latest research and analysis and provide our analysts with expert review of their work from outside the Government. (U)

Outside support for our analytical efforts is provided in other ways as well. Approximately 40 scholars from universities and private research centers visited the Agency to consult with analysts under arrangements made by the Academic Relations Staff between January and October 1977. These informal, unpaid consultations were mutually rewarding in most cases. Many analysts also conduct consultations like these independently. (U)

Formal, paid consultations also are increasing. Research offices maintain panels of academic experts to provide continuing advice on production programs, and the Academic Relations Staff is developing a list of other scholars who will be called on to consult individually or collectively on future production. Five prominent specialists on Brazil in several disciplines were recently engaged as consultants to advise on a National Intelligence Estimate. Arrangements like this will be a routine aspect of NFAC's expanded academic relations program. (U)

A new program of dinner symposia with the Director, interested Agency officers and academic experts is also managed by the Academic Coordinator. Offices make unilateral arrangements for consultations as well; through its Academic Relations Committee, the Office of Regional and Political Analysis conducts a guest speaker program under which scholars are paid to make presentations and consult with analysts for a day. (U)

Perhaps the clearest indication of the progress that has recently been made in improving the Agency's ties with academia is the growing participation of our specialists at academic and professional conferences. Between January and October of 1977 approximately 250 of our people attended 150 conferences, conventions, and symposia in their areas of interest. More and more of our specialists are being asked to make presentations at these affairs, and the Academic Relations Staff has helped to stimulate interest both in the Agency and among conference program chairpeople. More than 30 specialists presented scholarly papers as panelists at these meetings last year, including an entire panel made up of CIA specialists at the national convention of the International Studies Association in March. (U)

A variety of other contacts with the academic community also are flourishing. Thirteen student and academic groups visited the Agency under NFAC/DDI auspices during the first ten months in 1977. Most were briefed by a senior official and toured the Operations Center, and some also heard substantive briefings from analysts. NFAC/DDI representatives accepted 14 invitations to speak on campuses around the country during the same time period. In all instances the visits were

highly successful and uncontroversial. There might be many more campus speaking engagements by our people, except for the restrictions imposed by Agency regulations which prohibit our soliciting invitations or advertising our availability. This year, one NFAC specialist is on a teaching sabbatical on campus and a tenured Cornell professor is a scholar-in-residence in ORPA. Both of these programs will be expanded. (U)

Relations between the Agency and private research centers and their specialists have expanded as well. The Academic Relations Staff has opened a tentative dialogue with the directors of approximately 30 "think tanks," most of them affiliated with universities, and has under consideration many others that offer competence in areas of interest to NFAC research managers. Contacts with other re-

search centers, particularly several in the Washington area, have increased markedly during the last year or so. (U)

Other aspects of the academic relations program have been effective as well. A periodic newsletter, "Notes on Academic Relations," is circulated to all analysts in NFAC. The Academic Relations Staff composed this publication with the main objective of informing analysts of developments in Agency-academic relations, of the areas of competence of certain research centers, and of participation by our people at conferences and meetings. (U)

CIA's Office of Training has maintained a continuing relationship with members of the academic community over a period of years. During the past year, for example, its briefing

officer participated in 18 briefings for various college student audiences. Two distinguished academicians—Joseph J. Sisco, President, American University; and John K. Galbraith of Harvard University—spoke in the CIA Guest Speaker Program. The Information Science Center has utilized a number of scholars to review its program, present lectures, and participate in seminars. Over 50 academicians have lectured in such CIA courses as the Senior Seminar, the Advanced Intelligence Seminar, and the Midcareer Course. (U)

These and other efforts now being considered are important means of keeping intelligence specialists informed of one another's outside and academic activities, as well as keeping them abreast of developments in academia that may be relevant to their own research. (U)